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Lay-Craft Exemplified IN A DISCOVERY OF THE WEAKNESS OF THE

Late Attempts of the Author of
Priest-Craft in Perfection and
Mr. Benjamin Robinson Minister
of the Gospel, to Prove the
English Clergy Guilty of *For-
gery.*

In a Letter to M^r. Robinson.

L O N D O N : *R*
Printed for Richard Wilkin, at the King's Head in
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(Pr. 3 Pence.)



LAY-CRAFT Exemplified

IN A DISCOVERY

Of the Weakness of the Late Attempts to prove the *English* Clergy Guilty of *Forgery*.

SIR,

THE small Knowledge I formerly had of you, and the good Temper that I had observ'd in some Writings of yours that I had read ; occasion'd me to entertain so good an Opinion of your Learning, Candour and Prudence, that I was led the more eagerly to peruse your late *Review of the Case of the Liturgies, and their Imposition*. I'me sorry that I am oblig'd to tell you how much I was disappointed in my Expectations : In so much that had not your Name been to the Book, I could never have believ'd it to be Mr. Robinson's. As to the treatment of your Adversary I've nothing to say, tho' I think the Plea which I've heard that you make for your Bitterness, that Mr. Bennet has express'd as much, is not what I should think would justifie me in the like Case. But

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what I complain of is your manifestly siding with the great Enemies of the Christian Priesthood; For sure they must see but very imperfectly who can't discern the Design of the late Pamphlet called *Priest-Craft in Perfection*, to be not only against the Clergy of this Church of *England*, but to make the Priest-hood in general *every where spoken against*. You are pleased to reflect on the *Party-Men*, but pray consider whether too great Zeal for a Party has not led you to give such an Elogium to so ill a Book. But to use your own Words, *I am not without Hope, that you your self will be more offended with it, than any other Person*, when you see the Answer that is a Preparity to it, wherein will be a much truer Discovery of *Lay-Craft*, than that *Ingenious Gentleman*, as you are pleased to call him, has made of *Priest-Craft*. Tis very plain that we don't know our selves, that we often think our selves unbias'd and without Prejudice, when perhaps few are more deeply tinctured with it. You your self, I believe, an't sensible of it, but other People can't but wonder that a Man of Mr. *Robinson's* Sense and Learning should ever applaud a Piece, writ with such-bare fac'd dilingenuity as *Priest-Craft in Perfection* is, and commend the Writer of it as an *Ingenious Gentleman*, when there is scarce a Paragraph throughout the whole Performance that favours of any thing but *Malice* and *Pique*. For that supposing what he says to be true p. 12. that the first Clause of the 20th Article, viz. That the Church hath a Power to decree Rites and Ce-remo-

remonies, and Authority in Controversies of Faith is a perfect Forgery ; Is not the sense of that Clause suppos'd in the remaining Words of the Article ? If it be not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing at all ; what need is there to affirm that it is not lawful for it to Ordain any thing that is contrary to God's Word Written ? If the Church has no Authority in Controversies of Faith, is it not impertinent to assert that the Church is a Witness of Holy Writ, and ought not to decree any thing against the same, nor expound one Place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another ?

Farther, is it not a part of the Acknowledgement of all the Reformed Churches, that the Church has such a power, as is here asserted ? Thus for Instance the Augustan Confession, *De ritibus Ecclesiasticis qui sunt humana Autoritate Instituti docent ritus illos servandos esse, qui sine peccato servari possunt.* The Saxon Confession, *fuit aliqua temporum & aliorum quorundam rituum distinctio.* The Wirtemberg, *Quod hæc Ecclesia habeat jus judicandi de omnibus Doctrinis, & Interpretandæ Scripturæ.* The Bohemian, *Humanas Traditiones, ritus & Consuetudines, que nihil Pietati adversantur, in publicis Conventibus servandas docent.* But to name no more, the Assembly of Divines to whose Judgment you are used to pay great Deference asserts, * That it belongeth to the Synods and Councils ministerially to determine Controversies of Faith, and Cases

* The Confession of Faith, &c Composed by the Reverend Assembly of Divines —— London. 1658.

Cases of Conscience, to set down Rules and Directions for the better ordering of the publick Worship of God, and Government of his Church. Let any one now judge whether any more be asserted by the 20th Article of Religion, even allowing the disputed Clause to be a part of it, than is asserted in the Confessions I've now quoted. But the shameless Wri-

In Controversies about Doctrines, where she hath received no such clear Determination of either part from Christ and his Apostles, she hath Power to determine her own Sense in the Controversie, and to determine which part shall be receiv'd and profest for Truth by her Members, and that too under Ecclesiastical Penalty and Censure, which they accordingly are bound to submit to, not as an infallible Verity, but as a probable Truth, and rest in her Determination, till it be made plain by as great or a greater Authority, that this her Determination is an Errour. Or if they shall think it so to be by the weight of such Reasons, as are privately suggested to them, yet are they still obliged to Silence and Peace (where the Decision of a particular Church is not against the Doctrine of the Universal) not to profess in this Case against the Churches Determination. Because the Professing of such a controverted Truth is not necessary, but the Preservation of the Peace and Unity of the Church is. This is not to assert Infallibility in the Church but Authority. The Sentence shall bind to submission, tho' the Superiors may err in the Sentence. Pref. to Bishop Sparrow's Collect.

ter of Priest-Craft represents this Power to be a Power in the Governors of the Church to Determine what shall be received and professed for Truth among the Members of the Church, and to bind them to submission to their Sentence, tho' they err in their Sentence. Priest-Craft, &c.

For

For this Account of the Nature of the Authority of the Church in Controversies of Faith, He refers his Reader to Bishop Sparrow's Preface to his *Collection of Canons, Articles, &c.* Whose words I've faithfully set down in the Column over against what this Writer quotes as *His*. And I leave you to Judge whether or no, according to the Liberty that this Writer is pleased to take, any Church be free from being abused and Misrepresented. You are pleased, I observe in another place, to hint as if the cry of *False Brethren* were perfectly Groundless. But who I pray can forbear affixing that term on those who at the same time that they stile the Church of England *a most Excellent and pure Church*, and *the best Constituted in the World*, are for taking all Opportunities of abusing and reproaching her?

But to shew you further, how little this Writer deserves Your *Commendation* and *Applause*; I am to observe to you that his affirming that the disputed Clause was not contained in the Imprinted Book that was ratified by Parliament is only a proof of His being more Confident than some other Men. As to his reasons for it they are very mean and trifling. For,

I. 'Tis plain, as I'me assured by a very worthy Friend who has seen and very carefully perused the Manuscript of the Articles which passed, 1562. That that Manuscript is only a rough draught and was never intended for a perfect Act or Record; Since the Manuscript is on Paper, which 'tis not usual for the perfect Acts of Convocation to be Writ

Wit on. And there are frequent putting in of Words, and lines in a different hand ; and many crossings out of Words, Lines, Sentences, and some times of whole Articles, without any notice taken of it by the Subscribers : To which I add that in the Subscriptions to these Articles there are four Bishops wanting, *Bristol*, *Rochester*, *Oxford* and *Gloucester*. Whereas it appears by Extracts out of the Register of the Convocation, that *Gloucester* who held *Bristol* in Commendam, and *Rochester* did Subscribe, and *Oxford* was then Vacant. That the Clause was in the Record, is plain from a Printed Copy Published by Authority by the Queens Printers presently after the said Articles were agreed upon, which has the said clause in it, as I'me assur'd by a Friend who has seen it ; and from the Attestation of a Publick Notary produced by Arch Bishop *Laud* in the Star Chamber, and mentioned by this Writer. 'Tis true indeed he attempts to Invalidate this latter Testimony by shewing. That the Arch-Bishop contradicted himself? But a little Consideration will serve to shew the contrary. What Arch-Bishop *Laud* asserts according to this Writer is this. 'The O-

' That be sent to the Publick Records in ' original Arti-
 ' his Office, and here under his Officer's Hand, ' cles of 1571.
 ' who is a Publick Notary, is returned to ' I could ne-
 ' him the 20th Article, with the Affirmative ' ver find my
 ' Clause of the Church's Power in it. And there ' Paper Study
 ' is the whole Body of the Articles to be seen ; ' at Lambeth,
 ' and that these Articles were fully and fairly ' or anywhere
 ' agreed to and Subscribed in 1562. ' else ; and
 ' And as to the Articles reviewed by the ' whether any
 ' Convocation in 1571. He says, They ' Copy of
 ' them

them were ' were settled as in the Year 1562. with the
 left there I ' Clause in them for the Church: for looking
 cannot tell. ' further into the Records, which were in his
 own hands he found the Book of 1562 subscribed by all the
 Lower House of Convocation in the Year 1571.

Now pray where is the Contradiction, to affirm that he found the Book of 1562 subscribed by the Lower House of Convocation in the Year 1571, and to affirm that he could never find the Original Articles of 1571? Is the Book of 1562, and the Original Articles of 1571 the same? No I suppose this Writer knew that well enough, and therefore in repeating the words he changes *the Book of 1562* into the *Articles*, and had the *Arch-Bishop* said so, no one Disputes his putting a Falshood on the World: But the *Arch-Bishop* was more Scrupulous than this Writer, who seems resolved right or wrong to bear us down with Confident and Bold Assertions tho' never so weakly supported.

As to the Record of the Articles that *Arch-Bishop Laud* says were agreed and Subscribed to in 1562 and for which he produced the Hand of a Publick Notary in the Star-Chamber, he Answers.

I. By asking a parcel of Impertinent Questions, which he knows cannot be Answered, since the Records themselves are Burnt and not in being; and by suggesting that the *Arch-Bishop*, or at least his Officer, was a Fool as well as a Knave, so as not to be able to Distinguish *real Subscriptions* from a *long scroul of Names*. This Writer and his Friends are notable Discoverers of Frauds. But why I

B pray

pray may I not in any of the Copies of the Articles Write the Names of the Supposed Subscribers without intending a Forgery? And suppose I should mistake the Names of the Subscribers of those of 1571 for those of 1562. Must this mistake needs be a Forgery? Or must I not be esteem'd very silly to design it as a Fraud when 'tis so very Obvious and so easy for any one to detect?

II. He asserts that there could be no Records of Convocation in the Arch-Bishop of Canterbury's Office in *Laud*'s time. But this is another Proof of this Writers Knowledge and scrupulosity. Nothing can be plainer from the usage of Convocation than that the Registers or *Acts* of it are lodg'd with the Arch-Bishop as the President of the Convocation. And that therefore there is no room to doubt that the Register of the Convocation 1562 was so disposed of, especially since we are assured of it by the Attestation of a Publick Notary. That the Articles left by Arch-Bishop *Parker* to *Bennet* College, were only the rough draught, and not made up into perfect *Acts* or Records of Convocation, I've shewn before, and therefore there being such a Copy of the Articles left with the College is no proof that the perfect *Acts*, or their being made up into Records, were not in the Arch-Bishop of Canterbury's Office.

III. As to the Characters of Arch-Bishop *Parker* and *Laud*, it seems to be nothing to the purpose to shew that the Original Record of the 39 Articles as paſſed in the Convocation

vocation of 1562 was not in the Arch-Bishop of Canterbury's Office in Arch-Bishop Laud's time, since that they were so is not proved by the Arch-Bishop's Testimony, but the Attestation of a Publick Notary. All Comparisons they say are odious. 'Tis pretty plain that this Writer compares the Characters of these two great Men in order to Vilifie and expose them Both. But

*Since they are high, and you are low,
Ye little Curs why Bark ye so?*

IV. His Argument from what Dr. Heylin says of the reason of Burning Dr. Mocket's Book is very weak. Take it as it lies. Dr. Heylin conceives that the true reason of Burning Dr. Mocket's Book was his leaving out the first Clause in the 20th Article concerning the Authority of the Church, therefore the Original Records of the 39 Articles were not in Arch-Bishop Laud's Office. But to make this Consequence out, the Writer produces abundance of if's, If Mocket's Book was Burnt out of Enmity to Arch-Bishop Abbot; If the reasons Publickly assign'd were what the Dr. Suggests; If the Dr. conceives aright; Now these if's destroy one another, for if the Book was Burnt out of Enmity to Arch-Bishop Abbot, 'twas not Burnt for its Omitting the Controverted Clause. If it was Publickly own'd that the reason of Burning it was the Omission of the Clause, 'tis plain that it was not Burnt out of spite to the Arch-Bishop. And if 'twas Publickly carry'd that the Omission of the Clause was the reason of Burn-

ing it, there was no occasion for the Dr. to conceive any thing about it. But let it be which you please of the If's that is true, I can't conceive how they prove that the Original Record of the Articles of 1562 was not in the Arch-Bishop's Office. By whom Dr. *Mocket*'s Book was ordered to be Burnt I an't certain, but suppose it to be by the Privy Counsel, who don't always make Publick the reasons of their Proceedings. As to the Court Bishops having an opportunity to shew their Enmity to Arch-Bishop *Abbot*. What could they do to him, supposing Dr. *Mocket* to have falsified the Articles? Must an Arch-Bishop answer for all that his Chaplain does? As to their settling the Authority of the disputed Clause, 'twas not I presume then disputed, which indeed seems the more probable from this, that there was nothing done to assert the Authority of it.

Another Argument to prove that the Original Records were not in Arch-bishop *Laud*'s Office, is a Testimony of the Arch-Bishop himself in these words, *The Original Articles of 1562 with many Hands I did see and peruse at Lambeth; but whether the Bishops Hands were to them or not, I cannot remember.* This he takes for granted as an Affirmation of the Arch-Bishop, as if those Articles he saw at Lambeth were only Subscribed by one House of Convocation, and one Province, whereas the Arch-Bishop only says that he *cannot remember* whether the Bishops Hands were to them or not: Sure things may be that we don't *Remember*. And by the way, this is an Instance how Scrupulous this *blessed Martyr* was not to put a falsehood

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falshood on the World, by affirming that for Truth which he was not sure was so. But however we are sure that to those very Records, the Names of the Bishops were subscribed, nay that * some subscribed to them who did not to the rough draught of Arch-Bishop *Parker*.

His last Argument is, that there was a double Subscription of the Articles, and that thus doubly subscribed they were either numerically the same, or somewhat different one from another; and that either way the Records, which Arch-Bishop *Laud* produc'd could not be the true. But why so? Suppose that the Upper House of Convocation subscrib'd the Articles on Paper, *January 29th 1562.* and then sent them down to the Lower House to be subscrib'd by them, and that afterwards they were engross'd on Parchment, and again subscribed by the Members of both Houses, and of both Provinces. Might not the Articles on Paper be left by the Arch-Bishop to *Bennet College*, and the Record remain in the proper Office for it? On the whole, must we not think very meanly of the Understanding of Arch-Bishop *Laud*, to suppose that he should in so publick a Manner, affirm what he knew would be very easie to disprove, if false; and that too when he had Enemies enough that would have been glad of the Opportunity to've ruin'd him. The Arch-Bishop's Register was easie to come at; 'twas no difficult matter

* Vid. Mr. *Strype's Annals*. p. 282.

ter to see the Record he appealed to, and consequently to detect any Fraud that had been us'd about it. Besides, it appears that there were a pretty many in the Convocation, that refus'd to sign the Articles : And it is much therefore that any Alteration should be made in them without any complaint or notice taken of it. Whom shall we suppose to be guilty of this Forgery ? If the Priests, it must be either those that were in Convocation, or those that are out of it. To suppose that those in Convocation put in the Words, is to grant what is disputed for : And 'tis odd to suppose that the Clergy out of Convocation should so much differ from their Bishops and Representatives, as to insert a Clause that they were against. And if they had a mind to it, 'tis yet hard to conceive how they should get it printed by the Royal Printers ; however, so very early as the beginning of the very next Year after the Articles passing the Convocation, at the end of the Year before. And 'tis yet as difficult to reconcile it to common Sense, to suppose that such a Forgery should be acted, and yet none of our Bishops and Clergy that subscrib'd the Articles in Convocation, should ever take notice and complain of it, as an Imposition.

His Reflection on Bishop *Pearson*, as being guilty of down-right Forgery and Falsification, is very Rude and Unchristian. But you must know, that that great Man writ an Exposition on the Creed, and that is an unpardonable Sin with Men of this Writers

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Complexion. But after all the Falsification is in this Writer; for that I am assured by a Friend, that there is at Cambridge, a Copy of the 39 Articles in *English*, Printed by *Jug and Canwood*, the Queen's Printers, in the Year 1571, which has the controverted Clause in it. But of this you may expect to see farther by another and a much better Hand. And I hope by that means you'll be satisfied, how unjust your Reproach is in calling the Insertion of that Clause a *grave Cheat*.

As to there being Copies printed without the Clause, tis easie to account for it: You observe your self that the Common-Prayer-Book is not printed exactly, according to the Original Record. And you may observe that where it differs, it follows the former Editions of that Book; and so it is in the Articles. The 20th Article in the Articles of *Edward 6th* was without the Clause, and so thro' mistake 'twas printed afterwards, tho' the Clause was order'd.

But you, Sir, are pleas'd to back this Writer with giving another Instance of the Clergies Forgery. *These, say you, are the Men who have impudently presum'd to foist it, the Power of the Church, into the Articles of her Religion; nay even into various Editions of her very Bible.* The Proof you bring of this very grievous Accusation, is the Contents of the 149 Psalm. The Prophet exhorts to praise God for —— that Power which he has given to the Church, to rule the Consciences of Men; you are pleased " greatly to " wish, either that the same [the Writer of

" *Priest-*

“ *Priest-Craft in Perfection*] or any other
 “ proper Hand that has leisure for it, wou’d
 “ with like care trace the other Pretension
 “ to its Original ; that if possible, it may be
 “ known how and by whom, it first crept in
 “ to the *Bible*. This was I suppose said in
 a fit of Zeal ; otherwise sure you’d never
 have stil’d the Writer of Priest-Craft a *Pro-
 per Hand*, nor have desir’d a care like that
 he has shewn in tracing the Original of the
 Forgery, he complains of. Your greatest En-
 mies will I believe join with you in this de-
 sire that you may always be assisted with a
 Hand as *Proper*, and like his.

How these Contents came there I can’t
 say, but suppose them put there by the Tran-
 slatours ; had *Ainsworth’s Translation* been
 publish’d first, I should have guest they had
 been taken from thence. For thus run his,
 “ God is to be praised for His Graces to
 “ the Church, and Power given to the
 “ same : But be it as it will, here is no more
 asserted than as I’ve shew’d afore the *Assem-
 bly of Divines* has affirm’d, that *it belongeth
 to Synods, &c. to determine Cases of Con-
 science*. And yet I suppose you’d think it hard
 in us to call that Assembly, an *Ambitious, re-
 fless Faction*, who impudently presum’d to foist
 this into its Confession of Faith ; which you are
 pleased in the Spirit of Meekness to give
 those of the Clergy of the Church of Eng-
 land, whom in great Moderation you stile
 High-Church. Indeed you seem to think
 your self at Liberty, to treat these Men at any
 rate. *Papists, Jacobites, in the French Interest,*
 are

are Characters you seem to think too favourable, and not bad enough for them: But pray consider whether this be doing, as you wou'd be done by. Time was when you may remember the Government had as jealous an Eye over those of your Opinion, as now they seem to have over those whom you stile High-Church; and pray call to mind what Thoughts you then had of those who endeavour'd to encrease the Jealousie the Government had of you; what Complaints you then made of Persecution, and cruel Mockings and Revilings. I dare not allow my self the Liberty to say, that any of you did *seditionously bellow out your Complaints*; tho' if I may believe what I've heard from *some* that were present at your Meetings, there were not always used the most respectful and dutiful Expressions, towards the Powers that then were.

You are pleased to say that ' you are satisfied, that what the Clergy call their excellent *Church* and Constitution, is such a *Church* as will have all *Consciences* absolutely govern'd by the *Publick Conscience*, whose Supreme Head is still at as great a Distance as *St. Germain en Laye*; unless some of them may be disposed to look yet further, even to *Rome* it self for it. Which puts me in mind of an Observation of the great and good Arch-Bishop *Tillotson*; that *a Man that has once drawn Blood in Controversie is seldom known ever perfectly to recover his own good Temper afterwards*. I'd fain know what Occasion there is for these gross

and uncharitable Accusations: Is it nothing to accuse Men of Perjury and Falshood? Have we not taken the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy; and is it not therefore uncharitable to represent us, as owning another Prince, and acknowledging a Foreign Head? Have we not declar'd in a very Solemn manner against Popery, and yet must we be brought under the Suspicion of being inclin'd to it? And all because we complain of the Corruption of Christians, who turn their Faith into Faction, and the *Grace of God* into *Wantonness*. Because the Psalmist complains, that *God had broken down the Churches Hedges*, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her, *The Boar out of the Wood doth wast it*, and the *Wild Beast of the Field doth devour it*; must he therefore be an Enemy to *Zion*, and a taker part with a Foreign Power. Because the Prophet mourns, that the *Gates of Zion are desolate*, *her Priests sigh*, and she is in *Bitterness*; *Her Adversaries are the chief*, and her *Enemies prosper*, all that *honoured her despise her*, and *mock at her Sabbaths*; must he therefore be represented as having an Eye to the *Chaldeans*, and wishing them prosperity and Success against his Native Country and Lawful Government? I wish indeed that there was no occasion for any such Complaints as these. But I believe, a little Consideration will shew that Christianity rather declines, than Prospers in *England*: Don't we see every Day the main Articles of it question'd and disputed? Are not its Ordinances contemn'd

tenm'd and vilified? And the House of God publickly profan'd? in so much that, as a very excellent Person expresses it, * 'even good Breeding will not now secure that good Behaviour, Silence and Attention in it, which Conscience of the Heavenly Presence, Reverence of the Place and Company, and hope of Benefit, did heretofore secure. The most Important Truths of Christianity are attack'd with Insolence, and great Rudeness, by every petulant and idle Writer; its Ordinances all decried, and huge Contempt poured daily on its Ministers —— was ever Infidelity and Breach of Matrimonial Contract more avowed, and less regarded? Insomuch that 'tis Modesty and almost Vertue in this Age to be a little secret in these Bad Affairs.

But you are pleased to add with your usual Assurance, ' that the only *Power* the Clergy have is to exercise and discharge the Duties that are proper to their Function; whether relating to Prayer, the Ministry of the Word, or the Dispensation of Sacraments; And in each or any part of their Office, what power they have is meerly *Ministerial*. They are not *Lords* over God's Heritage, nor have they *Dominion* over the *Faith* of others. They are not to lay any thing as a *Law* either upon their Brethren, or their respective Flocks;

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but

* A Sermon Preach'd before the Queen at St. Paul's, August 19th 1708. By William Lord-Bishop of St. Asaph.

but what Christ himself has laid upon them: And even Christ's own Laws they are not allowed to enforce, otherwise than by *Moral Means*, such as *Prayer to God*, their own *Example*, strong and convincing *Arguments*, gentle and earnest *Entreaties*, &c. Whatever lies beyond these, is not within the Compass of their Commission; and consequently, a *Power* that Christ never lodg'd in their Hands. I've transcrib'd your Words at large, that you mayn't complain of my Misrepresenting your Sense. And I'm loath to think that you prophe-sie these smooth things, because you see them so very suitable to the Humour of the pre-sent Age. I've observ'd that there are Fashions even in Opinions; and you cannot, I suppose but know that the modish Notion now is, that both Kings and Priests, are Servants to our Sovereign Lords the Peo-ple; the latter you seem to intimate here, the former in page 431. of your Book where you find Fault with the publick Prayers, for as-serting that God is the *only Ruler of Princes*. What Ends you propose to serve by Writ-ing thus, God and your self know best; but if you think to build up your Party on the ruine of the Clergy of the Church of *Eng-land*, you may perhaps find your self Mi-staken. The Men you are pleased to side with, and use Complements to, you may depend on't, hate you as much as they do us: With them the Priests of all Religion are the same. And however they may now caress and admire you, you may perhaps be con-

convinced when 'tis too late, that they did it only because you joyned with them against the Clergy of the Established Church, which they had a mind to remove out of the way, in order the more easily to come at you. But to consider the Strength of what you're pleased to Offer on this Head of the Ministerial Power and Authority, which I think may be reduced to these Heads:

I. That the Christian Clergy have no Power to lay any thing as a Law, either on their Brethren, or their Respective Flocks, but what Christ himself has laid upon them.

II. That they have no Power to enforce even the Laws of Christ otherwise than by Moral Means.

III. That the *only* power they have is to exercise the Duties that are proper to their Function, and even the power they have to do that is merely Ministerial.

I. That the Christian Clergy have no power to lay any thing as a Law, either on their Brethren or their respective Flocks. Now I thought the Christian Priests were intended to be the Governors of the Christian Church, My Bible assures me that the Apostles acted *in 2 Cor. 2.10.* *the Person of Christ*, and that God hath set ¹ *Cor. 12.* some in the Church to govern the rest, to ^{28.} whom he has given *Authority and Power*. *Ac-* ² *Cor. 10.* *cordingly these are Ordered to Charge, to 13.10.* *Command and Teach, and to rebuke before all,* which

which things you cannot deny to be *Acts of Power* and *Authority*. Nay to satisfie us that this was no extraordinary Power limited to the *Apostles*, and confer'd by them only to serve some particular and extraordinary occasions: We find that 'tis reckoned among the Qualifications of a *Christian Bishop*, that he

- 1 Tim: 3. be one that ruleth well his own *House* in order to
- 4. take care of the *Church of God*. Accordingly the *Elders* that *Rule well* are ordered to be counted
- 5. 17. *Worthy of double Honour*. The *Brethren* or *Christians* are exhorted to *submit themselves to those*
- 15. 16. *who had addicted themselves to the Ministry of the*
- 1 Thess. 5. *Saints. To know them which* —— *were over them*
- 12. *in the Lord. To remember and obey them that had*
- Heb. 13. 7. *the Rule over them, and submit themselves*. Now
- 17. is it not very odd and unusual that there should be *Governors*, and *Rulers* in the *Christian Church*, who have *Power to Charge and Command*, and to *act in the Person of Christ*, and yet that these *Governors* and *Rulers* should have no *Power to lay any thing as a Law on their Respective Flocks*, but what *Christ himself has laid upon them*? This must suppose that *Christ has provided for every contingent Circumstance that might possibly happen*. And if so, then the *Apostle's general rules of letting every thing be done decently and in order, and to Edification*, are very *Improper and Impertinent*; since to what purpose are such *Rules and Instructions given*, when there is no room for doing any thing, it being already done and settled by *Christ himself*.

But further that Christ has not actually thus provided for all possible Contingencies is plain from the very Practice of the Christian Church in all Ages, which has had very different usages and customs; and that too even from those which were in Practice in the Apostles own times. Thus for Instance, the manner of Baptizing, of Administring the Lord's Supper; the Love Feasts, the Kiss of Charity or Holy Kiss; Women's wearing long Hair, and Men short; anointing the Sick with Oil, the Order of Deaconesses; Abstaining from Blood and things Strangled; all these we are assured were Apostolical Practices, actually in use in the Apostles times, and yet we at this time see that they are most of them, if not all, actually disused. Now if the Governors of the Christian Church may on just and fit occasions, lay aside Apostolical Practice, it seems very plain that they have a Power to make new Rules, and Establish other Laws according to the various Exigencies and occasions of the Church which they are set over. I don't indeed deny that this Power may be abused, but 'tis certainly a very weak Argument, that because the Power Our Governours have over us may be abused, therefore they have none at all. 'Tis plain the Apostle over-ruled the Pleas of the Contentious and Factious Party which opposed him, by telling them, that they the Apostles and the Christian Church had no such Custom as they would have had Introduced.

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The Protestant Churches, 'tis as plain, have all used this Power. They have made Laws and fixed Rules in all such Matters as Christ and his Apostles have left untouched, and undetermined. Even your Assembly of Divines have published their Directory.

And indeed without such a *Power* lodged in the Governors of the Christian Church, what a *Babel* and Heap of Confusion must the Christian Church needs be, when every Man is at liberty to do what is good in his own Eyes? What Disorder must there be in the Christian Assemblies when there are no Rules for bringing them into Order and Method? And yet what Rules can there be made unless the Governors of the Church have a Power to lay things as a Law on their Respective Flocks where Christ Himself has not laid a Law upon them? As to what concerns Matters of Faith, the Power claimed by the Governors of the Church, is very much Misrepresented by the Author of Priest-Craft, and those of his Gang. And I wish by your Application of the Texts you Cite, you had not given Occasion to us to think that you were of the same Sentiments. But notwithstanding, we don't claim to be *Lords over God's Heritage*, nor to have *Dominion over the Faith of others*. All the Power that is claim'd by the Clergy of the National Church is, a Power to Determine their own sense in Controversies about Doctrines, where they have received no clear Determination of either part from Christ

Christ and his Apostles. This their Determination, not being against the Doctrine of the Catholick Church, they think the Church under their care obliged to receive, tho' not as an Infallible Truth, yet as a Probable one which they are bound to Acquiesce in till it be made plain by as great or greater Authority, that this their Determination is an Error. And that in case any Private Christian should think any such Determination of a Controverted Doctrine wrong, yet that such Private Person is obliged to Silence and Peace, unless the Determination be such as is against the Doctrine of the Universal Church. Where Pray be Pleased to Observe, that we claim no Absolute Authority, but only an Authority of Order for the maintaining of Union and Edification; we lay claim to no Power to make new Articles of Faith, or to add necessary Conditions of Salvation. But when Controversies arise about Matters of Faith, and that there is no clear Determination of either part of the Controversy by either Christ or His Apostles; for the Governors of the Church to meet together, to examine such Differences, and determine on which side they think the Truth lies; we think that great respect ought to be given to such Determinations. And that 'tis for the Peace and Order of the Christian Church, that they be quietly submitted to, as however an Opinion that is very Probable, and the opposing of which may do much more harm than the acquiescing in it. And sure

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this can't be well stiled *Lording it over God's Heritage*. We allow that every Man is to judge for himself, to search the Scriptures, and to take his Faith from them. Nay undoubtedly every Person has a right to Examine the Decisions of the Governors of the Church in such Controverted Points, and to Satisfie himself whether things be so or not, as they have Determined them to be. But must it not be own'd to be of very great Advantage to the Peace and Order of the Church, for such Person, tho' he be satisfied that their Decision is wrong, quietly to submit to it and not to oppose it, since what their Decision is about, is confessedly such things as neither Christ nor his Apostles have determined ; and what they Determine is own'd to be not contrary to the sense of the Catholick Church? Sure every Body must think that under such Restrictions, happy had it been for the Christian Church that every Member of it had so acted.

I should here have done, were it not for your quoting two texts of Holy Scripture, in order, I suppose, to make your Reader believe that what you said is Agreeable to the sacred Writings. But indeed, after so sharp a rebuke of another Person, and an Insinuation as if he did not *Converse with his Bible*, I did not expect that you would commit any mistakes in the Application of any thing taken from thence. But not to consider and not to read is much, I find, the same. The First Text you quote is,

1 Pet. 5.

1 Pet. 5. 3. This you apply as if the Apostle's meaning was to forbid the Clergy to exercise a lordly Power over the People committed to their care in imposing on them Laws which Christ himself has not laid upon them. Whereas 'tis plain what the Apostle means is that the Elders or Presbyters should not exercise Lordship over their several Districts, as the Roman Governors did, using their Authority to squeeze Wealth out of the People, and Enrich themselves. Thus *Acts* 1. 25. Κλῆρος is used to signify that charge or portion assign'd by lot to *Matthias*: And accordingly in *Tindal's Translation* of the Bible, these words of St. Peter are Translated thus, *not as thought ye were lordes over the Parishes*. By some others hath the word Κλῆρος been thought to mean the Possessions or Estate of the Church: So it's certain the word signifies, and this Interpretation is given of it by the Greek Lexicographers: And then the meaning of the words must be that the Apostle directs the Elders of the Church, that what Money was entrusted with them as the Governors of the Church, they should not think themselves the *Lords* or proper owners of it, and accordingly apply it to their own private use, but be very exact in distributing it for those purposes, for which it was given to them.

But supposing that the word Κλῆρος does mean there the Christian People, these words are no manner of proof that the Governors of the Church have not a Power in any case to lay any thing as a Law upon their respective

Flocks. No more can be intended here than a caution against their abuse of the Authority and Power which they have, the word Κατακυρεῖν is used in an ill sense, and is accordingly Translated, *Dominor*, to exercise Dominion, and is applied to the Arbitrary Power which the Princes of the Gentiles exercised over their Subjects. *Matt. 20. 25. Luke 22. 25.*

The other Text you quote is 2 Cor. 1. 24. *Not for that we have Dominion over your Faith.* Which in my poor Judgment is altogether as little to your purpose as the other: As indeed the words stand by themselves, they may seem to make for you: But if they come to be considered you'll find perhaps that they rather prove what you dispute against. The Apostle is giving the *Corinthians* his reasons why he did not come to *Corinth* according to their Expectations: One is that he purposely forbore, in Order to *spare them*, since if he had come whilst they were in that Estate which he had reproved them for, in his former Letter, he must have acted with very great severity, which would have been very grievous, and troublesome to them. Not, says he, that we should have used this Power over you on account of your Faith, for in that you have stood firm; *Τὴν γὰρ πίστει ἐστιχαῖτε*, so *Erasmus* Paraphrases the Words, 'Non
Dominamur nisi his qui peccarunt. Itaq;
Fidei nomine nullum habemus in vos Do-
minum in qua perseveratis, sed est in vita,
quod in vobis correctum volebam. We don't
use our Authority but on those who have
offend-

offended, therefore we don't pretend to exercise any Power over you, on account of your Faith in which you persevere; but what I would have corrected in you, relates to your Life and Conversation. To the same purpose Theodore, Τις μὴ πίστεως ἔνεκεν ὁδοκαὶ υἱὸν ὀπτιμένομαι, τὸν γὰρ ταῦτης υἱείαν πεινειδε, I in no wise complain of you on account of your Faith, for you have continued sound in that. So that the Words are a good proof of the Power that the Governours of the Church have in matters of Faith, in case any of their Flock should swerve from the Faith. And accordingly we find the Apostles Exercising this Power, and charging their Successors to do the same. Thus *Hymeneus* and *Alexander*, were delivered unto *Satan* for their having made *Shipwreck* concerning the Faith, 1 Tim. 1. 20. Thus the Apostle tells the *Corinthians*, that he had in a readiness to revenge all *Disobedience* among them. 2 Cor. 10. 6. *Titus* is order'd to reject a Man that is an *Heretick*, after the first and second *Admonition*, Cap. 3. 10.

This brings me to consider your *Second Assertion*, That the Governours of the Christian Church, have no power to enforce even the Laws of Christ otherwise than by moral Means: And these you mention to be, *Prayer*, good *Examples*, strong *Arguments*, and gentle and earnest *Entreaties*, &c. How many other means are included in that, &c. I can't say, but if you had thought *Excommunication*, and putting Offenders to shame, had been one of the moral Means

to enforce the Laws of Christ, you ought surely to have mention'd it: Unless its being run down and expos'd in this profligate and profane Age, you were loth to say any thing of it, for fear you shou'dn't be so well lik'd. 'Tis certain that the Discipline of the Christian Church, is no pleasing Argument to a wicked and perverse Generation, and therefore 'tis no wonder, that by those who make it their Business to humour and please it, it's given up, and not so much as a Word said about it. Who knows but that in time those *tender Consciences* which are now only *indulged*, may by these Means have the benefit of the *National Establishment*? But perhaps you mean by *moral Means* those Means that are exclusive of Force; and if you did so, you'll have I hope no one your Adversary on that Head. Undoubtedly all Religion must be Voluntary; the Soul of Man can no more be compell'd, than it can be kill'd by the Sword: Compulsion may indeed make Men Hypocrites, but the Wrath of Man can never work the Righteousness of God.

Your *Third Assertion* is, that the *only* Power the Governours of the Christian Church have is to exercise the Duties that are proper to their Function, and so say we; but then we think that their Determining in Controversies about matters of Faith, and obliging those Christians over whom they are set, to a quiet Submission to their Determinations; their Decreeing and Orderings Rites and Ceremonies, and exercising the

the Discipline of Christ's Church, are *some* of those *Duties* that are proper to their *Function*. But you add that the *Power* they have to do that is purely *Ministerial*. What you mean by *Ministerial* you are not pleased to say, and therefore we are left only to guess: If by *Ministerial* you mean that the *Governours* of the Church are the *Ministers* of Christ Jesus, and act by the *Authority*, and *Commission* they have received from him, Iv'e no more to say: But if by *Ministerial* you would be understood that the *Clergy* of the Christian Church are the *Servants* of the *People*, and derive all their *Power* and *Authority* from them; you have not magnified the *Priestly Office*. However it seems but reasonable that, in an *Age*, the *Humour* of which runs so much to despise the Christian *Priesthood*, you should have express'd your self a little clearer: But then perhaps your *Doctrine* had not been so well suited to the *Humours* of the *People*.

I shall close the trouble Iv'e given you with the Observation of an *Ingenious Person*. ' That, He that would be an Agreeable *Ecclesiastick*, must survey the posture of *Things*; examine the *Ballance* of *Interests*, and be well read in the *Inclinations* and *Aversions* of the *Generality*: ' And then his *Business* will be to follow the loudest *Cry*, and make his *Tack* with the *Wind*. Let him never pretend to cure an *Epidemical Distemper*, nor fall out with a *fashionable Vice*, nor *Question* the *Infallible Judgment* of the *Multitude*.—When *Fears* and *Jealousies* become *clamorous*, when

when Discontents run high, and all grow Mutinous and Mad; then especial care must be taken not to dilate upon the Authority of Princes, or the Duties of Obedience. His Point is to steal upon the blind side, and apply to the Affections, to flatter the Vanity, and play upon the Weakness of those in Power and Interest.

All I shall add is, that if it does please God in the way of his Judgments, to pour Contempt upon Princes, and make the Priests to appear base before all the People in this Nation, His Will be done: But woe be to those who are the Instruments of this Wrath.

F I N I S

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